

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated February 7, 2005. Claims 1-21 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 have been amended. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments made herein. Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9-13 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Applicant respectfully submits, at least for the reasons set forth below, that the rejections have been overcome or are improper. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the patentability of claims 1-21 for the following reasons.

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9-13, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,480,885 to *Olivier*. Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection appears to be in error. These claims appear to be rejected by U.S. Publication No. 2003/0093474 to Kakuta et al. ("*Kakuta*"). Accordingly, Applicant will address the claims in the above-identified application with respect to the *Kakuta* reference.

Kakuta is directed to a group contact system which enables members of a group that communicate over the internet, such as in a chat room, to obtain information regarding the other members of the group. Specifically, *Kakuta* discloses a group contact system including a server 4 for managing user information at a plurality of user terminals 2 which engage in a communication service operated on the server. (See the Abstract). The user terminal 2 contains a card-forming instruction means 5 and an input/output means 6, such as a keyboard and monitor. The card-forming instruction means 5 forms or creates a group card based upon a request by one or more of the users or user terminals 2. Upon such a request, the card-forming instruction means 5 transmits a card-forming request containing a user list to the server 4. The user list includes information identifying each user in the group, such as ID's of the user terminals and the nicknames for each user. (Paragraphs 0067 and 0068). The user information related to each user is stored in a user data base 7. The user information can include a user ID, nickname, photograph, email address, favorite hobby, facsimile number and other user information. The card-forming means 8 compiles the user information from the user data base 7 based on the card-forming request. (Paragraphs 0069 and 0070). Each information item to be

included in the group card has an access level that may be set by each user so that certain user information may be excluded from the group card. (See the Abstract). Accordingly, each group card may display different information. The invention described by *Kakuta* therefore enables internet users and specifically users in a chat room to obtain information regarding each user in the chat room so that one or more of the users may contact one or more of the other users using communication means outside of the internet, such as by telephone or facsimile. (See the Abstract).

Applicant respectfully submits that *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of amended claim 1. *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest exchanging information between users where the information relates to entering or joining a new virtual community as in the present invention. More specifically, *Kakuta* does not disclose a system employed in a virtual space or virtual world which enables a first user (or first avatar) to “drag” an icon representing a virtual community and “drop” the icon on a second user (or second avatar) in the virtual world to enable the second user to enter and/or join the virtual community associated with the icon as in the present invention. (See the specification, page 28, line 14 to page 29, line 13). The information included on the generated group card in *Kakuta* does not provide any information or access to a group or community.

Kakuta also does not disclose, teach or suggest a “second generation means for generating a second set of information including an information list showing said community a first user participates in from information relating to said plurality of users.” In *Kakuta*, the information about each user on the generated group card relates to personal information about the users such as their names and phone numbers and not information related to a community or group that each user participates in. The group card in *Kakuta* is therefore used to extend communications between members of a group to the real world. In contrast, the claimed invention enables users to exchange information within a virtual world, where the information enables one or more users to enter or join a particular virtual community, to further communicate within the virtual world.

Moreover, *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest the element of “a display which displays at least a portion of the virtual space and said information list.” As shown

in Figs. 13 and 16, *Kakuta* displays a two-dimensional space or chat room but does not show or display a virtual space or three-dimensional space as in the claimed invention. The display in *Kakuta* also does not display an information list indicating the group, community or communities a user participates in as in the claimed invention.

Kakuta also does not disclose, teach or suggest “an input control means for controlling the input from said other information-processing apparatuses, of a fourth set of information showing the operation by a said first user for giving a third set of information showing a specified community to a second user...” as in the claimed invention. As described above, *Kakuta* does not disclose or suggest enabling a user to give or transfer a third set of information associated with a specified virtual community, to a second user. More specifically, *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest displaying a community or an icon representing a community or communities which a user participates in and enabling the user to transfer that icon to another user by dragging and dropping the icon onto the other user in a virtual space or virtual world to allow the other user who receives the icon to join or enter the community represented by the icon.

The Office Action states that *Kakuta* discloses a “first generating means for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space capable of being utilized [by] the users of network terminals (0008, 0012, Fig. 11-16).” (See the Office Action, page 2.) Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Office Action. As described above, *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest employing the group contact system described by *Kakuta* in any type of virtual space or virtual world. Paragraph 0008 referred to by the Office Action is a portion of the background section which generally describes a virtual world. However, *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest employing its group contact system in any type of a virtual world or virtual space. Instead, the figures and description in *Kakuta* describes a two-dimensional space such as an internet chat room.

For at least these reasons, *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of amended claim 1. Therefore, amended claim 1 and claims 2-8, which depend from amended claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over *Kakuta* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended claims 9, 10, 11 and 12 include certain similar elements to amended claim 1. Therefore, for at least the reasons provided above for amended claim 1, amended claims 9, 10, 11 and 12 are each patentably distinguished over *Kakuta* and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kakuta*. Claims 3, 4 and 8 depend from amended claim 1. Claims 14-17 and 21 depend from amended claim 12. Therefore, claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended claims 1 and 12 because *Kakuta* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel elements of claims 3, 4, 8, 14-17 and 21 in combination with the novel elements of amended claims 1 and 12, respectively.

In light of above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-21 are patentable over the art of record because *Kakuta* does disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of these claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that Claims 1-21 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

No fees are due in this case. If any other fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 02-1818. If such a withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (112857-283) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD LLOYD LLC

BY 

Christopher S. Hermanson
Reg. No. 48,244
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135
Phone: (312) 807-4225

Dated: March 31, 2005